

Date: December 29, 2000

DSL-BQA-00-080

To: Nursing Homes

NH 48

From: Jan Eakins, Chief
Provider Regulation and Quality Improvement Section

Via: Susan Schroeder, Director
Bureau of Quality Assurance

The Minimum Data Set (MDS) and Annual Survey of Nursing Homes

The federal requirement for certified nursing homes to electronically encode and submit the Minimum Data Set (MDS) to the State MDS System was previously implemented for all resident assessments completed on or after 6/22/1998. The State MDS System now contains over two years' worth of nursing home resident assessment data. Notwithstanding the requirement to submit MDS data, nursing homes are also required to complete the Annual Survey of Nursing Homes each year. This survey contains several sections that could be completed using data stored in the State MDS System. Analysis of the MDS data submitted by nursing homes during the past two years indicates that the quality of MDS data is generally good. However, our analyses have also identified several problems, including missing or erroneous dates and missing assessments, particularly discharge assessments. These problems are widespread enough that it will not be possible to use 2000 MDS data in place of the corresponding questions in the Annual Survey of Nursing Homes. Until these problems with the completeness and accuracy of MDS data are eliminated, nursing facilities will have to continue to provide the same information via the Annual Survey. Fortunately, nursing facilities have the tools needed to monitor their MDS submissions and achieve the necessary level of data integrity.

Several actions were initiated in 2000 to improve the quality of MDS data stored in the State MDS System. Warning messages were elevated to fatal record messages, which have prevented records with obvious errors from being accepted by the State MDS System. Nursing homes are now able to use an automated process to correct errors in MDS records that previously were accepted by the State MDS System. In addition, many reports have been made available to nursing homes to access online through the State MDS System. These reports provide information on previously submitted MDS records and missing assessments and should be used by nursing homes to ensure data integrity and the completeness of their MDS submissions.

Listed below are activities that will assist nursing homes in identifying problems with MDS completion, encoding, and submission:

- Conduct quality improvement reviews of completed assessments to ensure assessments are coded accurately and RAI definitions are followed.
- Transmit completed MDS assessments to the State MDS System routinely. Weekly submissions are recommended. Review all errors reported on Initial and Final Validation Reports. Correct fatal record errors and resubmit rejected MDS records. If necessary, correct non-fatal record errors using the automated correction process.
- Review the online Roster Report and verify that only current residents are listed.
- Review the online Missing Assessment Report and follow-up on any resident identified as having missing assessments.

-
- Review the online Duplicate Resident Report. Review the accuracy of resident names, social security numbers, birthdates, and gender. Residents should only be listed once. Contact Chris Benesh at (608) 266-1718 or Cindy Symons at (608) 266-9675 if the same resident appears more than once on this report.
 - Review the online Error Summary by Facility Report that contains information on non-fatal MDS record errors. Take appropriate action to prevent identified errors from reoccurring.

The Bureau of Quality Assurance and the Bureau of Health Information are hopeful that in the future State MDS data can be utilized with confidence and a large number of duplicative questions can be removed from the Annual Survey of Nursing Homes. This will only occur if nursing homes improve the accuracy of MDS assessment data and take actions to ensure that all required MDS records, particularly discharge assessments, are submitted timely. If you have questions regarding the RAI/MDS process, contact Billie March, RAI Education Coordinator, at (608) 266-7188. Questions related to MDS encoding or submission should be directed to Chris Benesh, MDS Automation Coordinator, at (608) 266-1718.